For the Children

HAL'S INVESTMENT.

Hal's pocket was a very queer place,
A little of everything in it;
A ball, a knife, some hooks and tacks,
That he might need any minute.

But one day it held a brand-new cent,
Yellow and shining as gold;
Not to be spent for candy or toys,
But to be "vested," as he told.

So he 'vested first in shingle nails,
And straight off to his mother ran;
"I'll fix the closet for you now,
As well as the carpenter man."

Ten cents he earned with his penny,
Then bought two balls of stout twine,
And each fruit bush in the garden
He tied up straight and fine.

So the penny grew all summer,
Turned over again and again,
Until at "treasury meeting"
It counted up ten times ten.

The queer little trousers pocket
Could scarce all the money hold.
And a prayer went with each penny
As it into the mite box rolled.

—Over Sea and Land.

BERTRAND'S VALENTINE.

By Ernest Gilmore.

Bertrand had only been in America a few weeks. He talked in such broken English that when he went to school the boys all laughed.

"He's Dutch and no mistake," Herman Downing said, with a comical grimace, "as Dutch as sauer kraut."

"We'll have lots of fun out of him," Dick Steele observed. "Oh, my! Ain't he a picture?"

Yes, he certainly was a picture, but not in the sense Dick Steele meant. He was dressed very shabbily, to be sure—the sleeves of his old coat out at the elbows, patches on his knees and his tattered shoes tied to his feet with strips of leather. But notwithstanding these drawbacks, a true artist would have enjoyed sketching him. A sturdy little form, a pleasant face with honest blue eyes, an obedient son, a kind brother, a true, brave boy—that is a picture of Bertrand.

He did his best to master the English language, and the other boys did their best to torment him. But he tried not to mind their teasing. One day at recess he saw Herman Downing and Dick Steele looking at something which he thought very beautiful.

"Hello, Dutchman," called Herman, "watchin' us, are you? Wan't to see what we've got?" and he displayed a wonderful silken-fringed valentine, with cherubs floating about in a blue sky, underneath which flowers bloomed and birds fluttered. "I'm goin' to send this to my sweetheart, Dutchie. Where's your valentine for your sweetheart?" laughing as if his question was a good joke.

"I haf got a sweetheart—my Gretchen," said Bertrand, seriously, "but I do not buy de valentine—haf no money," and the boy turned away from the merry, laughing boys with a misty look in his big blue eyes.

"I say," said Dick, "let's hunt up a comic valentine to send him tomorrow, a rag-tag boy bowing down to a rag-tag girl."

"Good! so we will," assented Herman, "and if Dutchie wants to he can send it to his sweetheart."

The valentine was bought—a ludicrous thing—and stored away in the coat pocket of Herman until morning should come.

But the boy for whom it was intended did not arrive at the school-house, much to Herman's and Dick's regret. They found out from one of the scholars where he lived, and after school they took their sleds and raced out to the dingy old tenement. A sweet-faced, crippled girl opened the door in answer to their rap.

"We'd like to see Bertrand," they said.

"Come in," she said, politely, "mine brudder is sick."

They stepped within and stood mute and motionless at the scene before them. A sick woman was lying on a cot, looking very pale and weary. A young woman with one arm in a sling seemed to be waiting upon her. And Bertrand sat before a smoldering fire with bandaged throat and head.

"I'd get up if I could," he said, "but my head feels as if 'twould split when I move. You're good, boys, to come and see me. Please sit down."

"What's the matter?" asked Herman.

"I haf taken cold some way," and he shivered.

"'Tisn't very warm in here, is it?" asked Dick, wondering why the folks did not stir up the fire this bitter day.

"No, 'tisn't very warm," Bertrand said.

"We can't have it any warmer," put in the little crippled girl. "We're out of coal."

"Hush, Gretchen!" and the boy's face flushed.

The boys had heard enough and seen enough. In another moment they were out of doors. Their eyes looked rather red and misty. "I believe there never was a meaner fellow than I've been," said Herman.

"Unless I am," added Dick.

"And the poor little chap got that awful cold going without an overcoat!"

"And Gretchen isn't a sweetheart, but his own sister."

Daylight was just fading into night when a package was left at Bertrand's door. It was marked "Bertrand's Valentine." It was opened quickly. Ah! Bertrand would not take cold so easily again, for there were a warm overcoat and cap and shoes—all new; a nice suit, partly worn, a book with pictures, some delicacies, and other things. But there was another rap at the door, and a man set inside the door a basket of coal and one of provisions, with the sententious remark, "More to follow."

There were smiles and tears and prayers in the humble home that night, I can assure you. As for Herman and Dick, they had learned a lesson worth a great deal, never to treat unkindly the "least of these."—Northern Advocate.